

I am a lifelong mountain climber, and I know from experience that any difficult climb includes storms, and you make a mistake finding your route along the way. But what matters is that you dust yourself off and you move forward. I think there have been a lot of storms on this journey so far, and it hasn't been perfectly smooth. But it has been in the right direction. Despite our stumbles and twists and turns along the way, we kept our eye on the summit in front of us, where providing quality affordable coverage for every American is a reality.

Every successful expedition, in my experience, has a leader, and I want to take a moment to recognize our leader, Senate Majority Leader REID. He has literally had the health and well-being of millions of Americans on his shoulders—some would say the weight of the world. That is a heavy backpack. But at the same time he has shouldered that load, been an unwavering advocate for reform, and he has exemplified the American resiliency which has helped make our Nation the greatest Nation on Earth.

I would also like to thank my staff, especially Jake Swanton and John Rayburn, who have worked tirelessly to fight for Colorado and make quality affordable health coverage a reality for millions of Americans.

As I close, I want to say how proud I am that the health care bills we passed this week will modernize our health care delivery system, increase much-needed choice and competition within the health insurance industry, and help put our economy back on track, while clearly improving the financial security of middle-class working families.

This has been an historic week for Colorado and for the American people. The victory, of course, isn't for the Senate or the House, or the President, or for our political parties, it is for the American people. I have certainly been humbled to have been given the opportunity to serve my great State during this unforgettable, long, and sustained debate, and I look forward to the important climbs that still await us as we implement this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the signing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was historic. In addition to providing coverage and lowering health insurance costs for millions of

Americans, the legislation will truly transform how care is delivered in the United States. As part of this new law, we are improving Medicare for the seniors and people with disabilities who depend on the program, extending the solvency of the program, and closing the prescription drug doughnut hole.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act creates the Independent Payment Advisory Board, IPAB. The Finance Committee, led by Chairman BAUCUS and Senator ROCKEFELLER, devised the board to provide reason and expertise to Medicare payment policy. Experts have concluded that the board will in fact bend the cost curve, achieving key goals of health reform: lowering costs overall and increasing Medicare's longevity.

Built into the IPAB are protections for beneficiaries from limits on care and increased costs. The Senate will ensure that the new board operates in a transparent way with input from patients, providers, and experts to guarantee the best outcomes and continued access to care. Moreover, we in the Senate will oversee Medicare and the IPAB to protect the seniors and people with disabilities. Medicare is one of our most treasured programs, and the IPAB will only improve the program for beneficiaries in the future.

COWBOY POETRY WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the ninth annual Cowboy Poetry Week, which will be celebrated from April 18 to 24, 2010. Across the Western States, in public libraries, museums, and over the airwaves, cowboy poets and cowboy poetry enthusiasts will come together to celebrate the spirit of the West through this unique art form. What began as storytelling over the campfire has evolved into both a way to preserve the history and culture of the West, as well as a modern art form that embraces the cowboy way of life.

The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, in Elko, NV, celebrated its 26th anniversary this January. Through events like this, cowboy poetry has experienced a resurgence in recent years, at once preserving recitation traditions that are a central form of artistry in communities throughout the West and promoting popular poetry and literature to the general public. At cowboy poetry gatherings, urban populations are able to glimpse a way of life that continues to exist on rangelands across the West.

As someone from a small town in Nevada, I have seen firsthand how the West has changed since I was young, but thanks to cowboy poets, among others, we will never lose the true spirit of the West. For this reason, I would like to thank the thousands of people out there in a few short weeks celebrating Cowboy Poetry Week, and I wish them all an enjoyable and successful week.

RECONCILIATION

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, over the last several days, the Senate voted on a number of amendments to H.R. 4872, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. This important legislation makes changes to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which President Obama signed into law on Tuesday. In short, it makes a good bill better.

Now, at the very last minute, my colleagues on the other side have offered a number of amendments designed to play games with Americans' health care and to cause delays and obstructions as we reach final passage of this bill. I voted against the long list of amendments offered by the other side—as did the majority of the Senate—not because some weren't good amendments but because this was not the appropriate legislation to attach them to. I have been and will continue to be a champion of many of these issues, but I will not vote to play games with the health care of American families. Trying to tackle these issues at the last minutes of the health care debate is not appropriate or wise or responsible. Instead, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming months to find bipartisan solutions to these problems.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on the important occasion of Women's History Month. Since 1987, the month of March has been dedicated not only to remembering and appreciating the distinguished accomplishments of women, but also to commending their continued positive influence on society. I would like to call particular attention to the contributions of North Carolina women, as they have consistently proven themselves to be revolutionary in their thoughts and actions and have contributed immensely to the development of our Nation since its conception.

Our way of life has been bettered in countless ways by women revolutionaries, crusaders, politicians, athletes, and everyday citizens of North Carolina. From the 51 patriotic women who organized the Edenton Tea Party to Dolley Madison, whose social grace and political acumen helped create the modern White House; from Harriet Jacobs, a North Carolina escaped slave who exposed the injustices of slavery in her "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," to Mary Jane Patterson, the first African-American woman to receive a bachelor of arts degree; from Tabitha Ann Holton, the first licensed female attorney in North Carolina and the South, to Dr. Annie Lowrie Alexander, the State's first female physician; from Sallie Walker Stockard, the first woman to graduate from the University of North Carolina to Kay Yow, the great North Carolina State University women's basketball coach who led